

Breakfast Remarks, Richard B. Rennick, Franchise Emergency Action Team

INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISE ASSOCIATION FRANCHISE EMERGENCY ACTION TEAM

The Franchise Emergency Action Team, a.k.a. FEAT, was created to assist members of the International Franchise Association in their efforts to support disaster assistance throughout the United States. Working under the auspices of the I.F.A. Educational Foundation FEAT provides coordination enabling response to be both timely and specific to immediate needs. This response can best be described by the FEAT Mission Statement: *To mobilize the resources of the franchise Community and their business associates to help people affected by disasters. We will accomplish this through education, preparation, response and recovery assistance, in cooperation with national, state and local volunteer and government agencies.*

The idea of uniting the franchise community began with a luncheon discussion during the I.F.A. 1994 Convention in Las Vegas. Richard Rennick, CEO and Founder of American Leak Detection, involved in this original conversation, shared the concept with other I.F.A. members. The response from members, including officers of the I.F.A., brought overwhelming support and became an inspiration for Dick to take the idea even further. Things quickly happened. Non franchise companies doing business within franchising expressed a desire to participate. The Federal Emergency Management Agency expressed numerous advantages to having a coordinated effort from the business community. The American Red Cross was one of the first to see the efficiencies available through FEAT offering coordinated communications, the strength of franchising and the tremendous number of potential volunteers.

The Franchise Community has taken a pro-active approach by providing coordinated services in all areas and uniting Franchising in a positive and constructive manner giving assistance in times of need. This includes specialized support when disasters of all types occur. Groups such as the Red Cross, FEMA, state offices of emergency services and local agencies represented by NCCEM are usually the first to respond to a crisis. Each will benefit from skills of the various franchise systems, their products and their services.

Most recently tremendous relief assistance was needed with Hurricanes Hugo & Andrew, earthquakes in San Francisco & Northridge, floods along the Mississippi River & in Georgia, tornadoes and numerous winter storms. In each of these, franchise companies participated and contributed significantly to the response and recovery process. However, these efforts were often fragmented by both large and small companies when compared to the impact they could have made through education, planning and a coordinated response. Recognizing this the I.F.A. appointed Dick Rennick the Chairman of the Franchise Emergency Action Team to begin organizing such a response. Now, almost a year later, FEAT has been approved by the I.F.A. to begin putting together the necessary staff to provide this assistance.

When asked why he felt so strong about the FEAT program Mr. Rennick commented, "Aside from any benefits for Franchising, or individual companies, the most important interest served will be to our communities, our customers, our employees and their families. This is a chance to give back by helping the same people who make our businesses possible, but who now may be in temporary but desperate need."

Franchisors and Franchisees working together with suppliers and vendors will help foster a spirit of cooperation toward a common goal. In nearly every case during the past year when franchise companies have been asked to help their response has been immediate. Going forward the sheer size of franchising as a combined force becomes staggering in terms of help for emergency services. Consider these numbers: Over 600,000 establishments across the country. These locations represent over forty one percent of all retail sales. Franchise companies have more than 8,000,000 employees. Of even greater significance is the diversity within franchising and the knowledge of their industries. Autos/trucks, restaurants, apparel, sundries, business aids, construction, trades, educational products, cleaning products & services plus many more.

As FEAT matures they will offer support in the following areas:

- Education - Using volunteers and services to expand educational distribution to schools, clubs, residences and the work place.
- Preparedness - Establish a data base of volunteers, products and services available with

advance planning and commitment to positively impact response time.

- Response - The ability to help in delivery and distribution while developing contacts for specific needs.
- Recovery - Many of the products and services offered through franchising are those that can help victims return to pre-crisis conditions.

The FEAT program will never take away from existing efforts of franchisors, franchisees, suppliers or vendors. Rather, the plan will make contact for commitment and fulfillment more expedient and in quantities eliminating possible waste. The data base of individuals, products, services and companies and the authorization for contact will be available prior to their need. The plan for 1995 is for the FEAT program to become an integral part of emergency services. We are at the beginning of an exciting way in which Franchising will expand their giving back to the communities where they live and work.